

Wanted to make sure you saw today's op-ed by Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) and Ranking Member of the House Administration Committee Robert Brady (PA-1) in the Huffington Post about the importance of the Election Assistance Commission. Congressman Hoyer has focused on protecting voting rights, which have been threatened in many states throughout the country, and ensuring every eligible voter has the most up-to-date information on how and where to cast their ballot this November. To read the op-ed, click [here](#) or see below:

The Abandonment of the Election Assistance Commission

By: Rep. Hoyer and Rep. Brady

While the embarrassing debacle of the 2000 election may seem like a distant memory to some, the unfortunate reality is an encore may be on our doorstep.

The Election Assistance Commission was created by the bipartisan Help America Vote Act of 2002 in order to avoid a repeat of the disastrous 2000 election, inspired directly by the failure of effective election administration in Florida that year. The only federal agency whose primary mission is to assist states carry out their elections and provide assistance to local election officials, the EAC has succeeded in this capacity beyond even the most optimistic projections. But now, due either to intentional neglect or outright calls for the agency's elimination, the EAC is currently without any commissioners or a permanent executive director. While the agency persists in carrying out its mission, its spirit is sorely bruised.

During the 112th Congress, two Republican-sponsored bills--H.R. 672 and H.R. 3463--were introduced to eliminate the Election Assistance Commission. Not only would they abolish an agency still supported and relied upon by local Republican and Democratic election officials from coast to coast, but they would also transfer the duties of the EAC to the Federal Election Commission, an enforcement agency whose sole responsibility is regulating campaign finance.

The specialized services provided by the EAC are essential to the effective administration of our elections - and to their safety and fairness. By serving as an information clearinghouse, state and local election officials can turn to the EAC for the support and guidelines needed to run their

elections. By providing this service, the EAC saves states considerable time and money, and by performing testing and certification services on voting machine hardware and software, the EAC ensures that ballots are accurately cast and counted. Perhaps most important, the EAC provides voters with confidence that their voices will be heard clearly.

Adding to the need for a strong and effective EAC, we've seen an unprecedented wave of new voting laws passed throughout the country. Lost in the debate over the motivation of these new laws is the question of how states will adapt in a presidential election year if there were no EAC to guide them. By attempting a complete overhaul of modern election law and by neglecting the only agency responsible for making sense of it, we are inviting chaos; a repeat of what occurred in Florida in 2000. But, more important, and most unforgivable, the right to vote is being undermined, and we've come too far to watch that fundamental right slip away.

The Election Assistance Commission is needed now more than ever, and it ought to be strengthened, not abandoned. Instead of attempting to dismantle it piece by piece, Republicans would be better off working across the aisle to ensure it has the leadership and resources it needs to safeguard the free and fair elections our country is counting on.